

Message Text

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ORIGIN SS-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /011 R

DRAFTED BY S/S-O:COVEY

APPROVED BY S/S-O:JOHNSON

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O 150309Z FEB 75

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY LISBON IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 035358

EXDIS

FOLLOWING SENT ACTION SECSTATE FROM ATHENS FEB 14

QUOTE S E C R E T ATHENS 1299

EXDIS

DEPT PASS DEF AND OTHER ADDRESSEES AS APPROPRIATE

INCL DEP ASST SECY DEF BERGOLD IN LISBON

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR GR

SUBJECT: US-GREEK NEGOTIATIONS-MILITARY FACILITIES

REF: ATHENS 1232 AND ATHENS 1298

1. THE CONCLUDING SESSION TODAY OF THE INITIAL PHASE OF OUR TALKS WITH THE GREEK GOVT ABOUT BILATERAL MILITARY AGREEMENTS AND US FACILITIES IN GREECE DID NOTHING TO CHANGE OUR BASIC EVALUATION OF GREEK OBJECTIVES (REFTEL). THE GREEK SIDE REFERRED AGAIN TO OUR FACILITIES AT HELLENIKON (ATHENAI) AND THE GREEK NEGOTIATOR IF ANYTHING HARDENED THEIR POSITION WHEN HE SAID THAT, ALTHOUGH THEY HAD NOTED THE IMPORTANCE WE ATTACHED TO THESE FACILITIES AND OUR CONTENTION THAT THEY SERVED GREEK DEFENSE NEEDS, NEVERTHELESS, THE GREEK GOVT WOULD "INSIST" THAT THE US

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FACILITIES AT HELLENIKON BE ELIMINATED. OTHER POINTS MADE

OR REEMPHASIZED BY THE GREEK SIDE WERE CONSISTENT WITH THEIR PREVIOUSLY OUTLINED POSITION. IT IS OBVIOUS THAT THE GREEKS WANT (A) TO REDUCE THE AMERICAN PROFILE, (B) TO UP-DATE, SYNTHESIZE AND TIGHTEN WRITTEN AGREEMENTS AND (C) TO MONITOR AND CONTROL MORE DIRECTLY US MILITARY ACTIVITIES IN GREECE.

2. AT AMB CALOGERAS' LUNCH FOR THE AMERICAN DELEGATION FOLLOWING THE FINAL SESSION, CALOGERAS TOOK STEARNS ASIDE TO PROVIDE WHAT HE TERMED AN "INDISCREET" CLARIFICATION OF GREEK POSITION. NEEDLESS TO SAY, THE CLARIFICATION WAS NOT PARTICULARLY INDISCREET, ALTHOUGH IT DID SUPPLY A HELPFUL BACKGROUND.

3. CALOGERAS SAID THAT HE HAD SEEN CARAMANLIS FOR THE SECOND TIME FEB 13 (HIS FIRST MEETING WITH CARAMANLIS WAS ON SATURDAY, FEB 8) AND HAD BRIEFED THE PM ON THE PROGRESS OF THE DISCUSSIONS. CARAMANLIS HAD INSTRUCTED CALOGERAS TO MAKE CLEAR THAT HE WISHED, ESSENTIALLY FOR POLITICAL REASONS, TO DEMONSTRATE PROGRESS IN REDUCING THE AMERICAN PRESENCE IN GREECE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. AT THE SAME TIME, CARAMANLIS RECOGNIZED THE IMPORTANCE TO GREECE OF EFFECTIVE SIXTH FLEET OPERATIONS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AND DID NOT REPEAT NOT WANT TO INTERFERE WITH THESE ANY MORE THAN ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY. STEARNS ASKED WHETHER THE PM HAD IN MIND TANGIBLE PROGRESS IN THE NEGOTIATIONS BEFORE THE SECOND ROUND OF TALKS WERE SCHEDULED TO BEGIN IN MID MARCH. CALOGERAS REPLIED THAT HE WAS NOT REPEAT NOT CERTAIN BUT THAT SOME INDICATION OF TANGIBLE PROGRESS BEFORE THAT TIME WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY BE WELCOME TO THE PM. STEARNS SAID THAT HE WOULD REPORT THIS TO WASHINGTON BUT THAT THE GREEK GOVT SHOULD REALIZE THAT CURTAILING OR RELOCATING ANY REPEAT ANY OF OUR ACTIVITIES POSED REAL PRACTICAL PROBLEMS. THIS WAS NOTABLY TRUE OF THE HELLENIKON FACILITY ALTHOUGH AS STEARNS HAD INDICATED IN THE FEB 12 PLENARY MEETING, THERE WERE DIFFICULT PROBLEMS RELATED ALSO TO ELEFSIS AND HOMEPORTING.

4. CALOGERAS SAID THAT THE US FACILITIES AT HELLENIKON
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WRE A REAL POLITICAL LIABILITY FOR CARAMANLIS. "COULD THEY NOT BE TRANSFERRED TO SOME LESS ACCESSIBLE LOCATION, SUCH AS NEA MAKRI?" HE ASKED. STEARNS REPLIED THAT RELOCATION WOULD COST LARGE AMOUNTS OF MONEY AND IT WAS BY NO MEANS CERTAIN THAT CONGRESS WOULD BE WILLING TO FURNISH THE NECESSARY SUMS.

5. CALOGERAS SAID THAT US FACILITIES AT HELLENIKON WERE

A BURR UNDER THE SADDLE OF THE GREEK MILITARY. GREEK OFFICERS HAD INFORMED HIM THAT WE HAD USED HELLENIKON TO SERVICE AIRCRAFT BEING DELIVERED TO TURKEY. THIS WAS TOTALLY UNACCEPTABLE TO THE GREEK GOVT AND THE FACT THAT A RECENT INCIDENT OF THIS KIND HAD OCCURRED INTENSIFIED THE INTEREST OF THE GREEK GOVT IN ELIMINATING US FACILITIES AT HELLENIKON. STEARNS RESPONDED THAT HE WAS AWARE OF ONE INCIDENT IN WHICH F-4'S BEING DELIVERED TO TURKEY WERE REFUELED IN THE GREEK FIR BY A KC-135 WHICH THEN LANDED AT HELLENIKON WITH PASSENGERS BUT THAT AS SOON AS THIS HAD BEEN BROUGHT TO OUR ATTENTION WE HAD TAKEN STEPS TO PREVENT ITS RECURRENCE. (WE ARE SENDING A SEPARATE MESSAGE ON THIS SUBJECT.)

6. STEARNS REPEATED THAT HELLENIKON SHELTERED A VARIETY OF IMPORTANT SERVICES MOST OF WHICH PROVIDED DIRECT OR INDIRECT BENEFITS TO THE GREEK DEFENSE EFFORT. WHILE RELOCATION WOULD BE EXTREMELY DIFFICULT, INTEGRATION OF US FACILITIES INTO THE ADJACENT HELLENIKON AIR BASE SHOULD BE POSSIBLE AND WOULD DO MUCH TO REDUCE THE GREEK GOVTS POLITICAL PROBLEM. HE ASKED CALOGERAS TO LOOK CAREFULLY AT THIS LINE OF APPROACH TO SEE WHETHER SOME COMPROMISE COULD BE REACHED WHICH WOULD PRESERVE THE VALUABLE FACILITIES HELLENIKON.

7. CALOGERAS SAID US NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE SPANISH INTERESTED THE GREEK GOVT AND MIGHT PROVIDE A MODEL FOR NEW BILATERAL AGREEMENTS BETWEEN GREECE AND THE US. HE ASKED WHETHER WE COULD SUPPLY THE TEXTS OF US-SPANISH BASE AGREEMENTS AND ANY ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON THE OPERATION OF OUR BASES IN SPAIN WHICH WOULD BE RELEVANT TO GREEK-US NEGOTIATIONS. STEARNS SAID
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THAT WE COULD PROBABLY NOT REPEAT NOT SUPPLY THE GREEKS WITH THE ACTUAL TEXTS OF OUR AGREEMENTS WITH THE SPANISH, SINCE SOME OF THESE MIGHT WELL BE CLASSIFIED, BUT THAT WE COULD FURNISH INFORMATION ON OPERATING RELATIONSHIPS NOT ONLY WITH SPAIN BUT ELSEWHERE. HE OBSERVED THAT SPAIN COULD NOT IN ANY CASE BE AN EXACT MODEL FOR THE GREEKS SINCE SPAIN WASNOT A MEMBER OF NATO. CALOGERAS ACCEPTED THE DISTINCTION BUT SAID THAT THE GREEK SIDE WOULD BE INTERESTED IN ARRANGEMENTS REACHED IN OTHER COUNTRIES INCLUDING SPAIN FOR THE OPERATION OF US MILITARY FACILITIES.

8. CALOGERAS AND STEARNS AGREED THAT THEY WOULD REMAIN IN INFORMAL CONTACT WHILE THE FORMAL TALKS WERE RECESSED SO THAT BOTH WASHINGTON AND ATHENS COULD KEEP ABREAST OF

DEVELOPMENTS AS THE TWO GOVERNMENTS FORMULATED THEIR
CONSIDERED REACTIONS TO THE FIRST ROUND OF TALKS.
KUBISCH
UNQUOTE INGERSOLL

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: NEGOTIATIONS, MILITARY BASES, MILITARY AGREEMENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 15 FEB 1975
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: SmithRJ
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975STATE035358
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: O:COVEY
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750055-0603
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750238/aaaabihi.tel
Line Count: 173
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: ATHENS 1232 AND ATHENS 1298
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: SmithRJ
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 03 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <03 JUN 2003 by ElyME>; APPROVED <09 OCT 2003 by SmithRJ>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: US-GREEK NEGOTIATIONS-MILITARY FACILITIES
TAGS: MARR, GR, US
To: LISBON
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006